



# Piping Times

Vol. 28, No. 2. November, 1975



15p

# THE PIPES OF WAR

SIR BRUCE SETON

and

PIPE-MAJOR JOHN GRANT

**First published 1920. 321 pp., including 9 illustrations.**

**With a new introduction by**

**Major General Frank Richardson, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E., M.D.**

This book first appeared in 1920, two years after the signing of the Armistice which ended the First World War. Written whilst information could still be obtained at first hand from many sources, it was designed as a tribute to pipers in war, as well as to inspire a new generation of pipers to take up the torch in memory of the 500 pipers killed and 600 wounded during those terrible years.

The book is divided into three main sections. The first part deals with the war itself and the campaigns in which pipers were involved.

The second part of the book is devoted to Regimental Records of famous Scottish regiments: the Scots Guards, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, the Gordon Highlanders, etc. All had their part to play, and their pipers and music are mentioned in detail.

Lastly comes additional material in the form of essays supplied by various contributors, e.g. "The Irish Pipes" by W. H. Grattan Flood, Mus.D., K.S.C. and "The Music of Battle" by Philip Gibbs.

This reprint contains an interesting new introduction by Major General Frank Richardson, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E., M.D., who has been a judge of piping for over 40 years, and is Vice-President of the Piobaireachd Society.

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**COMUNN NA PIOBAIREACHD**  
**THE PIOBAIREACHD SOCIETY**  
**Competitions, 1976**

1. The following tunes are set for the competitions in 1976:

**A. The Highland Society of London's Gold Medal Competitions at the Argyllshire Gathering and at the Northern Meeting.**

Competitors will choose and submit four tunes from the following list :

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 1. The Lament for the Viscount of Dundee  | Book 1. K. |
| 2. The King's Taxes ... ..                | Book 5. K. |
| 3. MacNeill of Barra's March ... ..       | Book 10.   |
| 4. The Lament for MacSwan of Roaig ... .. | Book 1. K. |
| 5. Lady MacDonald's Lament ... ..         | Book 8. K. |
| 6. The Parading of the MacDonalds ... ..  | Book 7. K. |

**B. The Open Piobaireachd at the Argyllshire Gathering and the Gold Clasp competition at the Northern Meeting.**

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 1. The Battle of the Pass of Crieff ... ..  | Book 1. K. |
| 2. Lament for Colin Roy MacKenzie ... ..    | Book 3. K. |
| 3. The Lament for the Earl of Antrim ... .. | Book 3. K. |
| 4. Lament for John Garve MacLeod of Raasay  | Book 5. K. |
| 5. Donald Gruamach's March ... ..           | Book 2. K. |
| 6. The Bells of Perth ... ..                | Book 2. K. |
| 7. Scarce of Fishing ... ..                 | Book 3. K. |
| 8. Lament for Patrick Og MacCrimmon ... ..  | Book 3. K. |
| 9. The Unjust Incarceration ... ..          | Book 2. K. |
| 10. The Earl of Seaforth's Salute ... ..    | Book 6. K. |

Competitors will choose and submit five tunes from this list.

**C. The Piobaireachd Society's Gold Medal—City of Ottawa's Highland Games.**

Competitors will choose and submit four tunes from the list at paragraph 1A.

2. The tunes listed are published in the Piobaireachd Society's Collection and in the Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor as indicated by the letter K.

Competitors are not restricted to these settings although the judges may take into consideration the merit of other settings and the authenticity of settings quoted. Tunes with similar names but of entirely different melodies will not be accepted as alternative settings.

For the Music Committee  
 John MacLellan, Hon. Secretary.



# Piping Times

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### COVER PICTURE :

**Pipe-Major William Gilmour**

(see page 13).

# The Proceedings of the Piobaireachd Society Conferences 1973 and 1974

are now available to non-members.

**Vol. 1 (1973) contains—**

1. "The unpublished tunes in the Campbell Canntaireachd MS," by Mr. A. G. Kenneth.
2. "Problems of judging at piobaireachd competitions," by Capt. D. R. MacLennan and General F. M. Richardson.
3. "Ceol Mor and Gaelic Song," by Mr. Finlay MacNeill and Mr. Jake MacDonald.

**Vol. 2 (1974) contains—**

1. "Modern piobaireachd," by Capt. J. A. MacLellan.
2. "Canntaireachd," by Morag MacLeod.
3. "The MacKay Tunes—the story of some Sutherland piobaireachd," by Professor A. J. Haddow.

In each case the papers are given unabridged, followed by the entire discussion.

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# Editorial.

It seems as if sponsorship of piping is not only here to stay, but is likely to grow in scope and importance in the next few years. Apart from the work done in helping pipe bands, the first sponsors in the field were probably John Players, with a lavish donation of £1,2000 in 1968 for a competition and recital at the National Mod in Aviemore. (Since then they have reduced their effort considerably, so that this year they gave An Comunn £450 for piping, which would seem to suggest that cigarette smoking may really be on its way out. )

Next came the Scots House in London, adding large lumps of money to the annual London competition prize-list, and so encouraging more pipers to travel from Scotland for this enjoyable social function.

Most recent is Grant's Whisky, which far outshines any others in scope and effort.

The results of these sponsorships so far have been only the obvious ones—the pipers get more money, the sponsors get a lot of publicity. Apart from peripheral gains (such as the Mod drawing more money, and piping enthusiasts at Blair Atholl enjoying an evening of free booze and grub) these events have not yet done anything really valuable for piping—like raising standards, improving the status, producing new music, encouraging better playing. The Grants/British Caledonian Airways scholarship (now abandoned unfortunately) of sending a boy from Glasgow to a summer school in California did more good for piping than all the rest combined, because for two years it sent up the work rate of a hundred boys, all anxious to be chosen for the trip.

But these sponsored events should eventually do a great deal of good for piping. As more money is offered in more contests, it will become really worthwhile for a piper to spend more time perfecting his performances, and so standards will rise.

For new music we need new sponsors, but these will come too.

For an improvement in the status of the piper—and so of piping generally—we need a great many things.

But the biggest improvements in the piper's status can be effected by the pipers themselves. Their reaction, and the way they conduct themselves in the changing circumstances in the next few years, will determine very largely whether competing pipers will be treated as artistes in future, or whether they will continue to be looked on as the fankies of the music world.

# Grant's Championship

The second annual competition sponsored by William Grant and Sons Ltd. was held at Blair Castle, Blair Atholl, home of the Duke of Atholl, on Saturday, 18th October.

It can be no exaggeration to say that this was one of the most momentous competitions of the year. It may be some time before it can reach the status of the Northern Meeting or the Argyllshire Gathering, or even the Silver Chanter, but for an all-round display of piping by experts this stands high among the year's competitions.

Two things give it a decided advantage. In the first place only the best pipers are allowed to compete, and this adds tremendously to the enjoyment of the audience, the judges—and even the pipers themselves. Secondly, the pipers submit their own list of tunes, and although each arrives with his mind carrying six piobaireachds and eighteen other tunes, the fact that there are no set pieces means that every tune can be presented with confidence and assurance.

The hall itself is perfect for the occasion, and while the Raeburn portrait of Neil Gow may not cast quite the same aura as the speckled pipe of the MacCrimmons, the atmosphere is nevertheless obviously traditional and conducive to the Highland music. With the huge and enthusiastic audience generating appreciation and heat in equal measure, the pipers could have no complaints regarding surroundings and reception.

Tuning facilities are not quite perfect, but they are probably better than anywhere else. When the important problem of adequate heating from an early hour has been solved, the situation will probably be considered perfect by all.

Chairman for the day was John MacFadyen, and he welcomed the audience, pipers and guests shortly after 2.30 p.m. First piper, Duncan MacFadyen, appeared on the platform at 2.45.

## **The Piobaireachd.**

The tune chosen for Duncan was "Lament for the Duke of Hamilton," a MacCrimmon composition which is notable for the fact that it has three grounds. This was an excellent start to the competition, a fine tune on an excellent instrument by a top performer. Criticism of any of these players is almost invidious in the circumstances, and undoubtedly in this case there are few men in the world who could have given such a splendid rendering of this tune. Nevertheless, there were one or two points of expression which, though personal and intended, were not viewed with the fullest favour by the judges.

Hugh MacCallum, as always, gave a masterly performance. His tune was the big nameless one, "Chereda Darieva". This is a very

difficult tune to express, but Hugh managed to keep the song going through all the many long and difficult variations. Unfortunately, his drones started to go out at an early stage and become quite disturbing near the end.



**John D. Burgess.**

The tune prescribed for John Burgess from his list was the great "Lament for Ronald MacDonald of Morar". This is another piobaireachd with three grounds, although all much more musical than the "Duke of Hamilton". It is probably true to say that hardly anyone in the hall had heard John Burgess play this tune before, certainly not in competition, and there was a certain air of expectancy as he began. It is probably also true to say that few of us had ever heard such a moving interpretation of the tune as John produced. The first half of his performance was right out of the fairy tale, silver chanter and Alastair Crotach era.

Thereafter he fell into the unfortunate fault of not holding the theme notes in the taorluath and the crunluath, and playing what one former judge used to call "F. B. C."—pass between cadences.

In a life-time of listening to piobaireachd however this performance will always stand out.

Pipe-Major Iain Morrison of the Queen's Own Highlanders gave a very enjoyable performance of "Lord Lovat's Lament"—taken from the Angus MacKay setting, and not the usual Piobaireachd Society one. This tune of course is not nearly so demanding as many of the others, but Iain made the most of what he had to present.

Another of the great tunes, although not of the MacCrimmon era, was chosen for Iain MacFadyen. This was "Lament for MacLeod of Colbeck". Iain had a little bit of trouble in getting the pipe to his satisfaction, but then he set off on the long journey with calmness and assurance. The ground was well presented and expressed, and was followed by the variation which incorporates the unusual timing of a siubhal, one of the most attractive features of this tune. The phrasing was handled well and the tune went on to an excellent finish, marred only by one peculiar sound on an F, due to what must have been a faulty reed.

Again one had to wonder at the dedication and ability of these pipers, and the splendid recital of Highland classical music which they were presenting.

James MacGregor gave a confident rendering of "I got a kiss of the King's hand," but there was a feeling in this performance that he had been playing it for forty years or so and the freshness had worn off for him. Tempo changes were conspicuous by their absence, but as always, this popular piece played by a popular player was very much enjoyed by everybody.

Arthur Gillies pleased many with "The Battle of Bealach nam Brog". Although this was well played on a good bagpipe the timing of the ground left a good deal to be desired. At times it sounded like a compromise between two different styles of playing, and this, of course, can never be successful.

Last to play was last year's winner, James MacIntosh, with the splendid tune, "The Battle of the Park No. 2". Jimmy had one bad moment in the ground when either a finger stuck or he had a brief mental blackout, but other than that the tune was presented probably as he intended. There was however a definite lack of battle atmosphere throughout.

The judges for this event were Captain John MacLellan, Lieut. Col. David Murray and Seumas MacNeill. The results were:—

1, Iain MacFadyen; 2, Hugh MacCallum; 3, John D. Burgess; 4, Iain Morrison.

Of those not placed—and it was unfortunate that not all could be awarded prizes—several splendid performances were heard.

Murray Henderson's tune was the attractive "Rory MacLeod's Lament". This received the fullest approval of the audience, and it was obvious that in a classic contest only the smallest points of detail separate the winners from the rest.

There was a feeling however that Murray was not too sure what to do with the ground of this tune, being particularly tentative in line two of it. The pointing in variations one and two were considered to be just a bit overdone, especially in a lament. Taorluath and crunluath variations were first class.

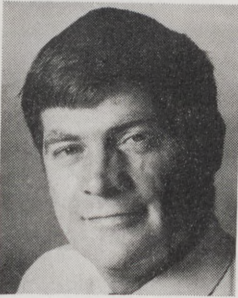
The other man from down under, Malcolm Macrae, played "The Big Spree". Again this was a most enjoyable performance, but to be picky one would have to say that this was not played as a spree, rather as a lament, and that the vigour of variation one and the beauty of variation two were not fully brought out by the rather even timing presented.

Some of the best playing of the competition in the minds of many people came from Pipe-Major Angus MacDonald of the Scots Guards. The tune chosen for him was another long and difficult one, "The Unjust Incarceration," but he gave an utterly sparkling performance in the ground, even although he had a change of mind at the third line.

Thereafter the tune more or less plays itself, and the only fault one could find up to the end of the crunluath was a certain monotony of tempo, with little change between the variations. At the start of the crunluath a mach however disaster overtook Angus, and after hitting a C for a B he decided to pack up. The disaster was the decision to pack up, not the wrong note.

Kenneth MacDonald was asked to play "Scarce of Fishing," but unfortunately went wrong immediately after the ground and stopped playing.

### **The march, strathspey and reel.**



**Iain MacFadyen.**

Unfortunately the piobaireachd event had run on longer than expected, and in order to finish at a reasonable time it was decided that the tunes in this event would be played once over each. In some way this detracts from the excitement of the contest, because the twice over march, strathspey and reel is probably the biggest test of technical ability there is. However, as was pointed out by several people, the experts are unlikely to be fazed by an increase in the duration of their presentation, and so the results obtained would be the same no matter what the conditions.

The playing was as expected, up to the highest standard. John Burgess was quite outstanding, as he might well be—since he was by far the most experienced competitor in this kind of contest. His long tunes were presented with care and elegance, and at the end the knowledgeable audience gave him an ovation which rattled the spears and shook the banners in this great hall.

Second prize went to Pipe-Major Iain Morrison for a very steady and accurate rendering. It was of interest that while playing his march, "The Marchioness of Tullibardine," the marchioness herself was gazing down from a portrait on the wall.

Arthur Gillies was placed third with another splendid performance, well paced, fingered and expressed throughout. In fourth place came Iain MacFadyen (with a flatter pipe due to a changed chanter reed) playing in his usual confident fashion. It was slightly a surprise to note however that Iain's tunes were all rather simple ones, compared for example to the length and difficulty of those offered by John Burgess.

The results again and tunes were :—

- 1, John D. Burgess, "The Highland Wedding," "Atholl Cummers," and "Pretty Marion".
- 2, Pipe-Major Iain Morrison, "The Marchioness of Tullibardine," "John Roy Stewart" and "Traditional Reel".
- 3, Arthur Gillies, "MacLean of Pennycross," "Atholl Cummers" and "The Rejected Suitor".
- 4, Iain MacFadyen, "Craigendarach," "Highland Harry" and "Thomson's Dirk".

The judges in this event were Dr. Colin Caird, Mr. Archie Kenneth and Pipe-Major Donald MacLeod.



**Left to right—Iain Morrison, the Duke of Atholl,  
John D. Burgess, Iain MacFadyen.**

The prize money in each event was, 1st £35, 2nd £25, 3rd £20, 4th £15. When the points were added up it was found that the Grant's champion for 1975-1976 is John D. Burgess, with Iain MacFadyen second and Pipe-Major Iain Morrison third. The champion received in addition a cheque for £200 and an engraved sgian dubh to keep, plus the custody of a silver chased drinking horn for one year.

Runner-up for the championship, Iain MacFadyen, received an additional £100, and the third man, Iain Morrison, received £50.

The prizes were presented by his grace the Duke of Atholl, and speeches of thanks to all concerned were made by Mr. Leslie Hodge of William Grant and Sons Ltd., and by Mr. Alasdair Anderson.

president of the Piobaireachd Society. Mr. Anderson in his address urged pipers and others to remember that this magnificent contest was sponsored by Grant's Whisky, and that if they were in the habit of partaking of the occasional refreshment they should make a point of asking for Standfast or Glenfiddich.

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## Canadian Gains Diploma

The second Canadian piper to be awarded the Diploma from the Institute of Piping is Pipe-Major William Gilmour, formerly of the Canadian Black Watch but now of the Canadian Forces Pipe Band, stationed at Gagetown, New Brunswick.

Bill Gilmour is of course no stranger to Scotland, having come over twice when he was a teenager to win the Inverchapel trophy for boys' piobaireachd at Cowal Games. He was in fact the first Canadian to show the challenge to Scottish pipers which has grown to massive proportions in recent years.

A decade ago he was one of the top players in the competing circuit in Canada, but due to what are usually called the "exigencies of the service" he has not been able to take part in competitions much in recent years.

In preparation for the grueling examination, he spent a preliminary ten day period at Edinburgh Castle, at the end of which he underwent a full day of written, oral and practical tests. The examiners were Lieut. Colonel David Murray, Captain John MacLellan and Seumas MacNeill.

The Diploma of Piping is the highest non-competitive award in the piping world. A successful candidate has to be not only a first class performer, but must also have a full background of knowledge on the theory and history of the art, and must have completed some original work as a contribution to piping knowledge.

The only other holders of the diploma in North America are Pipe-Major Archie Cairns of the Canadian Army and James MacColl of Los Angeles.

# Manchester Recital

by  
Owen D. Nash.

On the 27th October, the people of Manchester were treated to an illustrated programme of music for Macedonian, Northumbrian, Scottish, Thracian and other pipes by a gentleman by the name of Jamie MacDonald Reid. The event was financed by the Royal Northern College of Music.

This was a gigantic step forward for pipers in this area. At last the non-piping authorities down here were beginning to treat piping as a serious art.

On the night of the big event quite a large audience had gathered in the College's Concert Hall, all of us looking forward to being entertained and (dare we hope?) educated by Mr. Reid.

What a disappointment. It must have been the biggest let-down since the Titanic.

Mr. Reid gave us quite a detailed description of the various types of bagpipes that he had with him, and some of them he actually played for us. It was however rather difficult to decide as to whether or not these instruments were being played or just making a noise.

The interval came and went, and the second half of the programme was confined to Western European bagpipes. We were treated to vague descriptions of the Northumbrian and Uilleann pipes—I say vague because Mr. Reid didn't have these two types of bagpipe with him.

He did have a set of silver and ivory mounted Hardie pipes, and with these he gave a very brief description as to how the pipe should function. He then explained about ceol mor (again very briefly) and told the audience he would play the tune "The Lament for the Children".

He then proceeded to tune the instrument. During this manoeuvre his bass drone stopped and while he made the necessary adjustments he informed the audience that the pipes were not meant to play "Scotland the Brave," "Amazing Grace," etc. This in his opinion was "Go-Go music".

Finally the bass drone was put in playing order and we settled back waiting to hear "The Children". But Mr. Reid fooled us all. He played "The Company's Lament"—Go-Go fashion.

My own knowledge of ceol mor is very limited, but I have got a fair idea of the tune, "The Company's Lament". Mr. Reid played it very fast, giving no expression whatsoever. His double echo beats on E would not have been out of place in a jig.

After his recital was finished various questions were put to Mr. Reid. Some of the answers he gave were fantastic (to say the least).

Mr. Reid stated that he thought that ceol mor was originally harp music! When asked about the scale of the bagpipe and the intervals C to D and F to high G he gave as his answer a detailed description of harpists' finger nails.

Another member of the audience asked did he class tunes such as "Highland Wedding" and "Abercairney Highlanders" as Go-Go music? He replied with a description of the rules for Highland dancing at Braemar games.

The conclusion of this lecture/recital was that any members of the audience who possibly came to seek some knowledge about our great pipe and the other pipes, would have gone away more confused than they were before the event. The main crime in my opinion was that piping and ceol mor took a step backward in this area.

The organisers of the event say that the Scottish Arts Council or some other Society in Scotland recommended Mr. Reid to them. Surely the powers that be in Scotland could send someone who had a reasonable knowledge of our great instrument. Or are they all frightened by our Manchester United supporters?

Perhaps one day we will really get an expert financed by the Royal Northern College of Music to talk to us here in Manchester.

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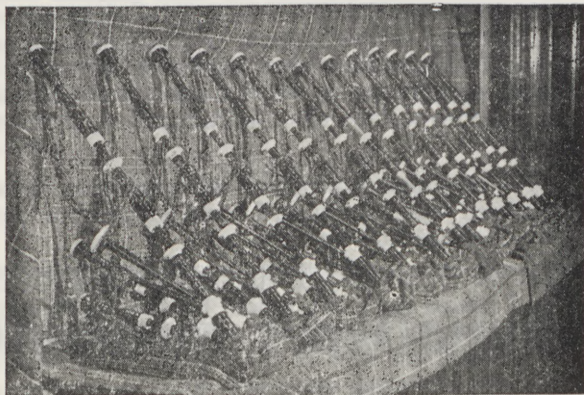
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# Angus Cameron

Angus Cameron was born in Lochaber in 1776. He is reputed to have been an excellent player and at an early age became piper to Donald Cameron of Locheil. When he was 17 years old—in 1793—he gained second prize in the Edinburgh competition, the first prize winner being John MacGregor, piper to the Breadalbane Fencibles, one of the famous MacGregor pipers of Glen Lyon.

The following year Angus Cameron won first prize. By 1819 he was the inn-keeper on the north side of Ballachulish Ferry, and one of his visitors there was Lord Cockburn, the famous judge, when he was on his Northern Circuit.

In 1888 Lord Cockburn wrote "Circuit Journeys" in which the following account of his meeting with Angus Cameron is recorded. This book has been recently re-published and we are grateful to Robert Cockburn of Fredericton, New Brunswick, for sending the following extract :

## NORTH CIRCUIT—AUTUMN, 1841.

I see that Anderson in his generally very sensible "Guide to the Highlands and Islands," gives it as his opinion that "the stage of 18 miles to King's House (from Tyndrum) is bleak and sterile". What the devil would he be at? Does he want wheat-fields, and larch weeds? His sole praise is to Loch Tulla, the only paltry part of the scenery, which he calls "picturesque". And the road over the Black Mount, which exhibits the most glorious mountain prospects, and which nature plainly compelled the road to be taken over in order that these might be seen, is described as crossing "a tedious, high, and tiresome hill, called the Black Mount". But he probably saw it all on a bad day, when his knapsack was fretting his back, and his shoe his toe, and his inward man longing for the King's House whisky.

We have found this inn on the south side of the water decently comfortable, better, so far as I could judge from merely calling, than the one at the north side.

But the north one was still kept by Angus Cameron, who had it when I passed three days under his roof in 1819, the most perfectly beautiful days my memory can recall. Even this evening it has been chiefly through the eyes of those days that I have been able to see this paradise of Scotch sea scenes.

Angus was the best piper in his day, and, when only eighteen, gained the competition prize at Edinburgh. But he had the misfortune to marry what was called "a ledly"—a very good wife, I hope, but who thought the pipes below her dignity, and so fiercely discouraged them, that at last she has compelled her spouse totally to abandon the source of all his glory. On one occasion, when he was delighting

a crowd of admirers, and would not take a gentle hint, she stepped forward with a knife and stabbed the bag.

Though giving great praise to old rivals, and to young aspirants, he bemoaned the general decline of the art, for he said that there was not now one single "real piper—a man who made the pipe his business," in the whole of Appin. I suggested that it was probably owing to the want of county militia regiments, for the Highland colonels used to take their pipers with them. But he eschewed this, saying that we had plenty pipers long before the militia was heard of. I then suggested the want of training. "Ay! there's a deal in that, for it does tak edication! a deal o' edication". But then, why were they "no edicated"? So he hit it on the very head, by saying it was the decline of chieftains, and their castles and gatherings. "Yes," said I, "few of them live at home now". "At hame! ou, they're a' deed! an' they're a' puir! an' they're a' English!"

His complimentary reasons for our sitting down in his house were very Highland. "There's a chyre for you, mem, for ye're heavy, an' no' able to stan' like ither folk". "An' here's a chyre for you, mem, for ye're young an' tender!" "An' here's a chyre for ye, ma Lord, for your Lordship and me's gettin' doon the hill noo." We thought there was neither weight, nor weakness, nor age among us.

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## PIPES IN EGYPT

The far flung appeal of the great Highland bagpipe has produced an additional source of income for Hassan Badr, a sixty-four year old former army corporal who spends four months every year piping to summer holidaymakers on the beaches at Alexandria. In this way Hassan averages an income of \$10.00 a day, which is big money by Egyptian standards.

During the rest of the year he is employed as a laundry man.

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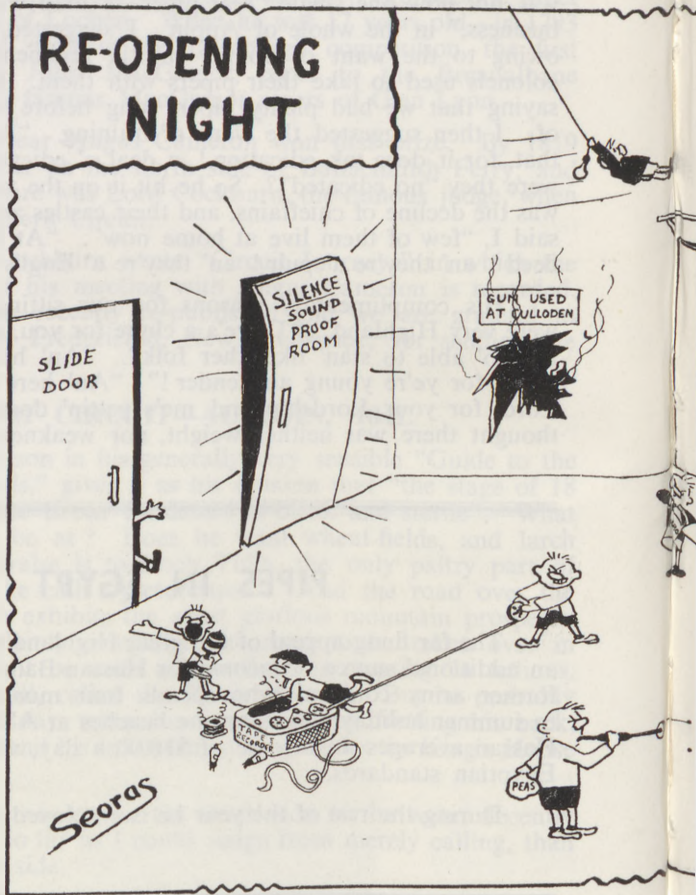
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## COLLEGE WINTER SESSION

The re-opening of the College always takes place on the Monday following the Northern Meeting, and is always a rather hectic affair, as might be expected. This year the situation has been even more chaotic than usual, due largely to the increasing interest in learning to



play the bagpipe. The first meeting of the Monday class for example contained forty-six pupils, of all ages, which is just about twice as many as the premises can hold. Some re-arrangements have been organised, but it is evident that the facilities of the College will be taxed to the utmost this session.



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# Myths and the Bagpipe

## PART TWO

by John Gould.

It was a dozen years ago, during my first attempts to get the drones of my pipes in tune, that I noticed the attraction which the sound had for bulls, and at the time I was glad there was a river between myself and my attentive audience. I remember that as I watched them, the thought flashed into my mind: this is the way in which animals were first tamed! It was a crazy idea, yet when I tried to find out just exactly how horned animals had been domesticated, I drew a blank. Settled agriculture—often referred to as “the Neolithic Revolution”—was the most momentous achievement of mankind, and it is true to say that all subsequent civilisation has sprung from that achievement. Now, the where and when of how cereals were first cultivated has been fairly well mapped out, but so far as I was able to see, no such information had accumulated on the subject of the domestication of sheep and goats, though this must have taken place before man could be free to cultivate any crop successfully.

The problem fascinated me, and I began to see the jumble of music myths in a new light, but realising that myths would be of no help here—they were all too late—I turned to what literature I could find concerning Stone Age cave-paintings. Almost immediately I came upon the Three Brothers Cave picture described in the first of these articles. I was astonished, for besides being perhaps the perfect illustration of the sort of thing I was looking for, the dating given for this picture is about fifteen thousand years before Christ, long before any trace of settled agriculture, let alone civilisation. Nor were the animals quite what I had expected: instead of goats, the picture showed a stag and a wild bull—by no means the easiest animals to have been domesticated. It is interesting to notice that sheep and goats, the more manageable of the horned beasts, were the first to have been tamed. Hence, I daresay, the Neolithic Revolution began in the Near East, where those animals were native, rather than in Europe, where they were absent.

This digression may seem to have little to do with music at all, and still less with the bagpipe, but it is necessary to my argument. In European myths there are several stories in which music plays the central role. Further, most of them have as their theme a contest between pipe music and that of strings, with the pipers losing in every case. Since myths do not concern themselves with trifles, we can be fairly sure that music was something more than a mere recreation or entertainment in those days. It must have had some important function in the ideas of society, and it follows that any change in the status of music mentioned in a myth must reflect some sort of

change in the social organisation. Some kind of upheaval did take place in Europe during the Bronze Age, about the time of the Myceneans, which was the period in which the myths reached their final forms, revised and edited to justify the new ways of life.

Now then, we can return to the Three Brothers Cave again and draw one or two more conclusions from that painting. For the moment, let us forget about music as we know it. As a highly vocal animal, man must always have been able to sing well enough without having to invent and develop the difficult and unnatural art of instrumental music in order to express himself. So why did he go to such trouble? Fortunately, that question has been answered: the strange, thrilling, and unnatural sounds made by primitive instruments were not originally thought of as music. They were considered to be the voices of the Gods, and as such were very holy, possessing powerful magic.

In most cases, the God whose voice is produced would be identified by association—by the similarity of the “supernatural” sound to some sound already known. For instance drums would naturally bring to mind the sound of thunder. With the hollow horn, bone, or stem, the process went much further than a mere association of sounds. Such tubes sound like bulls when they are blown, yet they are obviously not bulls. Well, a bull that is not a bull is an unearthly or supernatural bull. From this stage of thought it would be an obvious step to see whether the wild cattle themselves recognised this supernatural voice. As we know from the cave-painting, they did, as they still do today, and so the magical reasoning would be apparently proven beyond all doubt. If in addition to this magic, the reedpipe actually was “instrumental” in the domestication of sheep and goats a few thousand years later, the presence in myths of Gods who are associated with horned beasts, fertility, fire, music, and inspiration should surprise nobody, the connecting link in all the apparent diversity being wind—the breath of life.

So we can be fairly certain that the musician in the cave-painting is not playing any tune. He is simply making lowing or bellowing noises, and this can be inferred not only from his disguise as a Bull-Spirit, but from the length of the tube he holds, and from the response of the bull itself. In musical terms his performance would be described as an intermittent bass drone rising (perhaps) to a tenor pitch occasionally, due to the harmonic properties of the tube. To me, this is a reasonable foundation for supposing the most ancient component of the bagpipe to have been the bass drone. Once the double-reed principle had been discovered, horns and reedpipes would follow their different courses of evolution. Horn “bells” may well have been attached to primitive reedpipes simply to include their magical properties. Eventually this part of the hornpipe would become no more than a traditional appendage—maybe a lucky one. By classical times such things appear to have been discarded by the professional musicians, for the aulos and tibia seem to have been refined instruments, stripped of all unnecessary trimmings, and complicated, like our modern instruments, only by devices aimed at

increasing the number of scales they could be played in. Neither the hornpipe nor the bagpipe falls into this class of instrument.

To suppose that the bass drone is the oldest component of the bagpipe may well read like nonsense, but it is not at all out of line with the accepted ideas as to how musical instruments have evolved. This is an important point, for very few instruments have actually been invented, the organ being the outstanding example of that sort of thing. The bagpipe, often compared to the organ, is different altogether, being the result of an evolution which had more to do with magic than music in its earliest stages. This, at least, is what I am suggesting, and if it is true, then the bagpipe is a very ancient instrument. In the next article in this series I hope to be able to show that not only was the bagpipe known to those who were the ancestors of the Celts, but that the evidence seems to point to the fact that instrument was an abomination so far as they were concerned. Having said all this, I must remind readers that I am no scholar, and that everything I have to say must be regarded as speculation.

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## AUSTRALIAN STALWARTS



Two of the active members of the Queensland Highland Pipers' Society are Ray Summors (left) and Stewart Chisholm (right), pictured above. The society meets on the third Monday of each month in the Brisbane Caledonian Club, Main Street, Kangaroo Point, Brisbane.

# Minard Castle Competition

Lt.-Col. Gayre of Gayre and Nigg has again asked the College of Piping to organise a competition. The details are as follows :

Date : Tuesday, 31st August, 1976.

Time : 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Contests : A. Composing contest for new tunes, **open to all**.  
Entries have to be submitted by May 1st.  
For details see below.

B. Playing on the Highland bagpipe, **by invitation only**.

Event 1. Two of the new tunes in A above.

Event 2. March—two tunes of own choice from the compositions of John MacColl, John MacLellan (Dunoon) and Willie Lawrie.

Event 3. Strathspey and reel—one each of own choice.

## Rules.

1. The composing competition is open to all. The two classes of tunes are (1) a simple march, in 3/4, 9/8 or common time and (2) a competition-type reel.

2. Each composer may submit as many entries as he likes. He should give his name and address on a separate piece of paper, **not** on the tunes.

3. Tunes must be sent to the College of Piping, 20 Otago Street, Glasgow, to arrive not later than May 1st.

4. Composers must allow the organisers the sole publishing rights of all tunes entered, provided such publication takes place before June 15th, 1977.

5. The copyright of all tunes remains with the composer.

6. A prize of £20 will be awarded to the best of all the tunes submitted, and a prize of £10 to the best tune in the category other than the one having the best tune.

7. During the week beginning June 16th a short leet of the tunes will be drawn up. A ballot of these against names of playing competitors will be made, and one march and one reel will be allocated to each piper, for him to learn and play in event B1 on Tuesday, August 31st.

8. The adjudicators will decide event B1 on the merits of the tunes, not on the playing of them.

9. The two pipers who play the winning tunes in event B1 will each receive a prize of £10. No piper is allowed to receive both of these prizes. If the two best compositions are played by the same piper then one of the prizes will be awarded to the piper who plays best in this event, or to some other piper at the discretion of the adjudicators.

10. The two marches played in event B2 must be from the

composition of the Argyllshire composers John MacColl of Oban, John MacLellan of Dunoon and Willie Lawrie of Ballachulish.

11. The decision of the adjudicators in all matters is final.

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## Scottish Schools C.C.F. Contest

A facet of piping in Scotland which is not generally known is the solo piping and the pipe bands of what it is probably best to call "fee-paying" schools of Scotland. These are schools which have traditionally received financial assistance from the state, but augmented their facilities and service by charging fees.

Under the approaching set-up the state grants for these schools will disappear, and as a result some of the schools may disappear in their present form. Others however have decided to become completely independent—what one might call "private" schools except that this would then appear to be the opposite of "public" schools, which in England mean schools which are not public and where all pupils pay fees.

The situation is confusing, and political, and therefore on both counts not of much interest to us. But the schools do encourage the playing of the great Highland bagpipe and will probably go on to do this even more in the future.

Nine bands took part in the annual competition this year, and the results were as follows:

1, Dundee High School; 2, Dollar Academy; 3, Trinity College, Glenalmond; 4, Fettes College; 5, Edinburgh Academy.

In the individual piping, twenty-seven competitors came forward, and the result was:

1. J. K. S. Frater (Edinburgh Academy); 2, Colin R. MacLellan (George Heriot School); 3, R. J. Gibson (Daniel Stewart and Melville College); 4, M. Reekie (Dundee High School); 5 (equal), R. C. K. Cunningham (Edinburgh Academy) and R. K. Shedden (Strathallen School).

As further encouragement for the pipers in these schools the Royal Scottish Pipers Society instituted the first of what is hoped to become an annual competition, held in the Society's rooms in Rose Street Lane, Edinburgh. The boys played a march, strathspey and reel of their own choice, and the results were as follows:—

1. Colin R. MacLellan, George Heriot School;
2. Angus Cameron, Queen Victoria School, Dunblane;
3. I. I. MacInnes, Trinity College, Glenalmond.

The second of these competitions will be held on Friday, the 7th May, 1976.

# Luss

23rd July.

**March**—1, Pipe-Major Angus MacDonald, Scots Guards; 2, Arthur Gillies, Kilchrennan; 3, John D. Burgess, Dingwall; 4, Dugald Ferguson, Kirkintilloch.

**Strathspey and Reel**—1, Pipe-Major Angus MacDonald; 2, Harold MacAteer, Glasgow; 3, Murray Henderson, Dundee; 4, Arthur Gillies.

**Local March**—1, Ian Gibson, Dumbarton; 2, Alex Sommerville, Helensburgh; 3, Glen Gibson.

**Local Strathspey and Reel**—1, Ian Gibson; 2, Alex Sommerville; 3, Glen Gibson.

The judges were Alfred Morrison, Bishopton; Duncan Cameron, Edinburgh; and Iain C. Cameron, Edinburgh.

# Aboyne

3rd September.

**Piobaireachd**—1, J. MacGregor, Perth; 2, Malcolm MacRae, Kirriemuir; 3, John Stewart, Aberdeen; 4, Murray Henderson, Dundee.

**Marches—Men**—1, Duncan Watson, Aboyne; 2, J. MacGregor; 3, William Wotherspoon, Dundee; 4, H. Haining, New Zealand.

**Strathspey and Reel—Men**—1, Duncan Watson; 2, William Wotherspoon; 3, J. MacGregor; 4, R. J. Worrell, Canada.

**Marches—Women**—1, E. Marnoch, Aberdeen; 2, T. Innes, Dundee; 3, L. Nicolson, Aberdeen; 4, L. Harrison, U.S.A.

**Strathspey and Reel—Women**—1, T. Innes; 2, E. Marnoch; 3, L. Nicolson.

The panel of judges for the competitions were: Pipe-Major R. Nicol, Balmoral; Pipe-Major N. Meldrum, Invercauld; Pipe-Major G. Stoddart, Edinburgh; Mr. M. A. Mathieson, Aberdeen; Dr. W. R. Fraser, Aberdeen; W. Drysdale, Methil; Pipe-Major D. Morrison, Aberdeen.

# Harris

30th July.

**Open :**

**6/8 March**—1, Norman Gillies, Ullapool; 2, A. MacLeod, Stornoway; 3, N. Finlayson, AIness.

**2/4 March, Strathspey and Reel**—1, J. MacDonald, Kilmuir, Skye; 2, N. Gillies; 3, A. MacLeod.

**Jig**—1, A. MacInnes, Lewis; 2, N. Gillies; 3, A. MacLeod.

Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association Rosebowl for overall winner in open piping competition—Norman Gillies, Ullapool.

**Local Piping :**

**Slow March and March**—1, A. Macinnes, Lewis; 2, A. MacLeod, Stornoway; 3 (equal), P. Rose, Tarbert, and A. Morrison, Tarbert.

**Strathspey and Reel**—1, A. Macinnes; 2, A. MacLeod; 3, A. Morrison.

H.M. I. A. Cup for overall winner in local piping competitions (Lewis and Harris)—A. Macinnes, Lewis.

John N. MacLeod Trophy for Harris piper with most points in local competitions—A. Morrison, Tarbert.

**Under 16 :**

**Piping**—1, J. MacDonald, Kilmuir, Skye; 2, A. Gillies, Ullapool; 3, D. MacKillop, Dingwall.

**Chanter**—1 (equal), Katie Ann MacDonald, Kilmuir, and Duncan Campbell, Tarbert.

The judges were John Rennie, Inverness; Norman MacLeod, Stornoway; and John N. MacLeod, Tarbert.

The Isle of Skye Pipe Band (Pipe-Major Donnie MacKenzie) were in attendance at the games and played a number of selections in the course of the afternoon.

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Dear Seumas,

La Crescent, California.

I don't know the full measure of success your other summer schools achieved this year, but the one you headed at Pebble Beach certainly seems to have captivated the sweating masses. I have recently been in "letter-touch" with about six of your Californian students, and their chorus of wide-spread praise would, I am sure, warm the ice at the core of your school-teaching heart—if I released the plaudits! It was all extravagant, I suppose. It was all deserved, I know!

All the best,

Jock MacIntosh.

Dear Sir,

Ballyskeagh, Lambeg, Co. Antrim.

I read with pleasure the coverage given, of the Glasgow Opera House project and of the similar move in Edinburgh.

I gather that well in excess of £20,000,000 is being spent on the venture and that running costs will be about £2,000,000 per year, all this in Glasgow alone. This will of course be a tremendous feather in Scotland's bonnet.

However, let us remember that Opera was an imported art form and, whilst there are British composers of Opera, one's initial reaction is surprise that they do it so well, followed by an even greater surprise that they do it at all. I say none of this uncharitably and enjoy opera when and where I am able.

We are investing money largely in the music of the Italians and Germans whilst we neglect British music—I use the word British for reasons of this broad argument, on the basis that in Scotland the problems are Scottish but all else is British. My usage defined, I continue

Now, all this investment is going to be very fine for Scotland and of course for the tourist industry. Italians and Germans will be able to come and listen to their own music, willingly and heavily subsidised; and why not?

These continentals are very good judges of music. Mendelssohn for instance thought, and said, that the "Lament for the children" was the finest melody line in European music, and Dvorak brilliantly plagiarised our piobaireachd for his New World Symphony to quote only two examples.

The classical music of the Great Highland pipe is the very embodiment of Highland culture, and in the Lowlands the music by use and appreciation has become theirs. It stands amongst the great music of the world and yet, not one thousandth part of the sum spent on premises (exclusive of running costs) for opera in one city, has been spent on the promotion of the National instrument.

No voice is raised to our masters. We support our art as but we can and watch our piping awards at premier competitions go

overseas to countries which spend as much in a week in support of our National instrument as we spend in a year.

We are a disgraceful nation. We blather about the heather around the door of Granny's Hielan' hame (sic.) and the proud heritage of the Scottish race, then conduct our affairs with the strength and style of a London made haggis. Can we really put what remains of our culture into an empty Forfar shortbread tin and tie it with a ribbon (tartan of course).

I ask our nation's leaders for one tenth of the sum spent in one city on one opera house to be given to a national institute to give accommodation, teaching and recital facilities for Scottish music and dance.

If we don't waken up to the situation (now that the act of proscription has been graciously repealed) we shall find ourselves sitting down to pumpernickel and lager, listening to an Italian string quartet and ordering in French. If you think I'm joking, let me remind you that I'm writing this letter in English.

Blasad Gaidhlig,

L. Williamson.

Dear Mr. MacNeill,

Biberist, Switzerland.

Many thanks for your letter in May, and the consequent item which appeared in the "Piping Times". As you suggested, there was in fact no reply to my request, but as luck would have it, there is now a piper (Tom Diamond) on the staff of the British Embassy in Bern, and I will be getting in contact with him this weekend. I am sure this will be a fruitful meeting!

I enclose my cheque for renewal of my subscription to the "Piping Times"—plus an additional subscription for a young piper in Scotland—Thanks again for your help.

Yours sincerely,

David Low.

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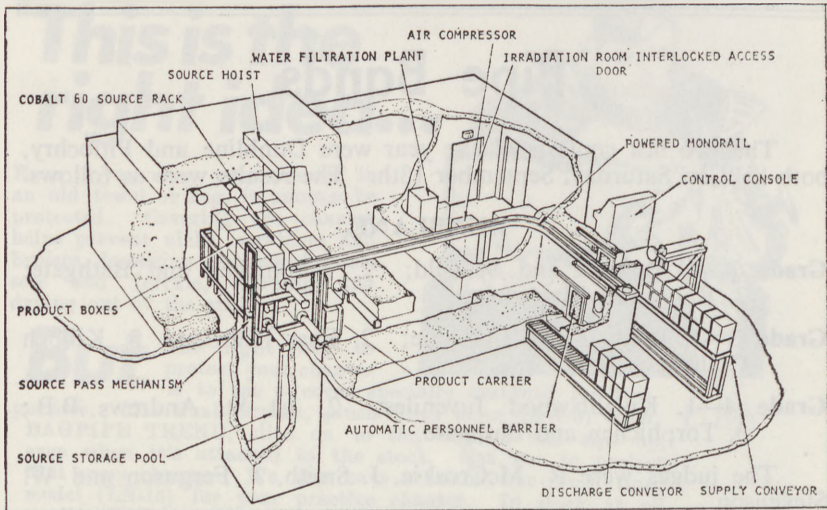
# New Woods for Pipes

*Dr. Duncan Baher, in Florida, South Africa, sends us the following note on the possibility of overcoming any shortage of traditional bagpipe materials.*

Much has recently been written about the shortage of wood traditionally used for making bagpipes. But no true substitute has been proposed.

As an enthusiastic supporter of pipe music I must confess myself loath to imagine a "genuine imitation plastic bagpipe". However, a newspaper article which appeared recently in our Johannesburg "Star", by Tony van der Watt, offers an alternative source of potentially high grade material. A lower grade wood could be machined to the blank form (with central holes I presume) impregnated and treated as described. The result should be a high quality substitute for blackwood.

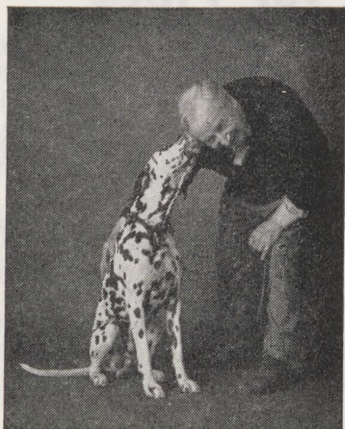
When the cobalt-60 source is lifted out of its well into the midst of the product boxes being irradiated, no person is allowed into the room. The boxes are introduced into the irradiation area, shuttled around the source, and withdrawn hydraulically under remote control. The room is surrounded by two-metre thick walls, and elaborate safety precautions are taken to prevent accidents.



**A diagram of the package irradiation plant at Pelindaba.**

I have heard of floor blocks made from low grade pine (also gunstocks) in this manner and these blocks had wearing properties as good as the best hardwood block flooring. The gunstocks I believe were superior.

I trust someone will have the courage to try my suggestion.



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The two last contests of the year were Dunblane and Pitlochry, both held on Saturday, September 13th. The results were as follows.

### **DUNBLANE.**

**Grade 2**—1, Bowhill and Seafield; 2, Torphichen and Bathgate; 3, Kelty and Blairadam.

**Grade 3**—1, Boghall and Bathgate; 2, East Kilbride; 3, Killoch Colliery.

**Grade 4**—1, Knightswood Juveniles; 2, 1st St. Andrews B.B.; 3, Torphichen and Bathgate.

The judges were R. McCroskie, J. Smith, J. Ferguson and W. Stevenson.

### **PITLOCHRY.**

**Grade 1**—1, Dysart and Dundonald; 2, Shotts and Dykehead; 3, Strathclyde Police; 4, Lothian and Borders Police; 5, British Caledonian Airways.

The judges were A. Burnside and J. Marr.



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